

Spring 2004



Disability Services Beacon

Information and Resources from the
Fairfax Area Disability Services Board

Leisure Services for Individuals with Disabilities

Fairfax County takes great pride in offering a wide variety of services that can fill every leisure hour and satisfy every recreational interest. Fairfax County recreation and nature centers, parks, golf courses, and historical sites offer classes, workshops, nature walks, history tours, garden programs, and fitness and exercise facilities. There is something for residents of all ages. Many programs charge fees for participation.

Two Fairfax County agencies provide leisure services for people with disabilities—the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) and Fairfax County Community and Recreation Services' Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS). The Park Authority is

committed to giving all residents equal access to recreation and leisure opportunities. In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all FCPA programs, camps, and classes provide reasonable accommodations and inclusion opportunities to individuals with disabilities. ADA accommodations include sign interpreters, assistive listening devices, program modifications, and inclusion support.

The Park Authority's award winning Adapted Aquatics programs are provided exclusively for persons with disabilities. All other programs and services are inclusive. If a person requires an accommodation under the ADA, a request must be made at least 10 working days in advance of the program. A written Accommodation Plan typically identifies how a person's needs can be specifically accommodated.

Inclusion support is also provided through a program called Leisure Coaching, which provides limited physical support for persons with disabilities to participate in camps, classes, and tours with the support of trained staff known as leisure coaches. The leisure coach helps the

person implement the written accommodation plan, which typically includes behavioral and transitional support, and activity modification or adaptation. The goal of Leisure Coaching is to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to work towards independent leisure participation. Parents or guardians must sign a written contract before Leisure Coaching can be provided to minors. More specifics about the program can be found online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ADA/ADA-faq1.htm or by calling the FCPA ADA Specialist at 703-324-8563, TTY 703-803-3354.

Additionally, the Park Authority publishes an *Accessibility Guide for Persons with Disabilities* which lists major FCPA facilities and gives information on the facilities' accessibility features, such as parking, ramps, restrooms, and access routes. It can be requested by calling 703-324-8563, TTY 703-803-3354, or by downloading from the FCPA web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm (third item down).

There are multiple ways of contacting the Park Authority to get information about their programs and services. One of the best is to subscribe to the free quarterly guide to parks and recreation, PARKTAKES, which is mailed out to subscribers. The publication contains information on all things recreational—parks, program schedules, fees, locations, directions, and telephone numbers, among others. To subscribe, call 703-222-4664, TTY 703-803-3354, or visit the FCPA web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakesform.htm to get a member number and subscribe to PARKTAKES.

Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) of the Fairfax County Community and Recreation Services offers other recreational opportunities geared specifically towards people with disabilities. TRS is specifically designed to provide programs on three levels of service to meet the entire spectrum of individual needs and capabilities. The first level is the foundation level, which provides programs with a high degree of structure and supervision. The second level is the transitional level for persons who have already developed some independent leisure skills. Lastly, the third

level is the integration level for individuals who can be successful with minimal support in general recreation programs.

TRS has programs which start for toddlers as young as 3 and which continue into adulthood. Therapeutic recreation programs are tailored to accommodate specific categories of disability, such as developmental, attention disorders, and physical and sensory disabilities. Therapeutic recreation programs run the gamut and include sports, fitness, arts and crafts, games, movies, and social and special events.

Contact Therapeutic Recreation by calling 703-324-5532, TTY 703-222-9693, or visiting their Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec/trs/pg1_Welcome.htm. Be sure to request their booklet, *Guide to Therapeutic Recreation, Programs for Individuals with Disabilities*, which lists their programs, including program descriptions, age level, dates, fees, how to register, and transportation information.

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Don't miss out on the opportunities available through the Park Authority and Therapeutic Recreation Services. Visit their Web sites or send an e-mail to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov and TRServices@fairfaxcounty.gov, respectively. Most programs require registration, some are free and some have a fee, but you don't want to miss out.

Finally, you can always learn more about ADA accommodations and/or the accessibility of specific places or programs by contacting the Park Authority ADA Coordinator at 703- 324-8727, FAX 703-324-3976, TTY 703-803-3354.

Parks and Recreation Contact Information

Park Authority ADA Specialist

703-324-8563, TTY 703-803-3354

PARKTAKES Subscription

703-222-4664, TTY 703-803-3354

Therapeutic Recreation Services

703-324-5532, TTY 703-222-9693

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec/trs/

Out and About with Disabilities

For many people, spring and summer mean travel. But travel demands careful planning for people with disabilities. Below are some useful resources and tips to make traveling with a disability enjoyable. The “Transportation Guide to Northern Virginia” gives information on public transportation in the area. It is available by calling or e-mailing Disability Services at 703-324-5421, TTY 703-449-1186, or disabilityservices@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Travel in Virginia

A wealth of information about travel in Virginia for people with disabilities is available in *The Virginia Travel Guide for Persons with Disabilities*. The 209-page, large-print guide describes the accessibility features of Virginia attractions, lodging and dining. To get a free copy of the guide, send an e-mail to VAinfo@virginia.org , or call the Virginia Tourism Corporation toll-free at 1-800-742-3935, TTY 804-371-0327. You can also

get a copy online at www.travelguides.org/vaguide.html. From the www.travelguides.org Web site you can also download travel guides for New Mexico, North Carolina, San Francisco, Ontario, and Australia. In addition, the Web site has links to other resources for accessible travel, including newsletters and databases.

National Parks

The National Parks Service's Web site, www.nps.gov, provides information about all the national parks and allows visitors to make camping reservations in the National Parks system. Call the National Park Service at 415-561-4990, or individual parks, for more information. The National Park's Golden Access Passport is for citizens or permanent residents of the United States who are blind or have a permanent disability. The Golden Access Passport provides free entry to national parks, monuments, historic sites, recreation areas, and national wildlife refuges that charge an entrance fee. It also offers discounts on fees for recreational activities. The Golden Access Passport is only available at National Parks that charge entrance fees.

Applicants must show proof of disability. More information is available toll free at 1-888-GoParks (1-888-467-2757), TTY 1-888-530-9796, Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 8 PM.

Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian Institution has ongoing efforts to improve access to its museums, zoo, and programs. Special tours are available if arranged in advance. These include audio descriptive tours, tours for visitors with cognitive disabilities, and tours lead by sign-language, oral or cued-speech interpreters, or deaf docents. Not all tours are available at all museums, so visitors need to plan at least two weeks in advance. *Smithsonian Access: A Free Guide to Visitors* details all the available resources and how to arrange for them. Accessibility information is available at the Smithsonian's Web site at www.si.edu/visit/visitors_with_disabilities.htm and accessible.si.edu, including an audio virtual tour of the museums. Visitors can also call the Smithsonian Accessibility Program at 202-786-2942 or TTY 202-786-2414.

Car Rentals

Most rental car companies offer modified vehicles for customers who need driving accommodations. Companies' Web sites offer information about the available adaptations but reservations for those vehicles may need to be made by phone. In addition, some companies specialize in providing wheelchair-accessible vans, for both drivers and passengers. Accessible Vans of America, Wheelchair Getaways, and Wheelers Accessible Van Rentals are three such companies; all have Web sites and 800 numbers.

Disabled Parking in Washington, D.C.

A word of caution about on-street parking in Washington, D.C. Visitors with disabled parking placards and plates from outside the District can park in disabled parking spaces. However, they must pay the meter and stick to the posted times. Parking on the National Mall is under the National Park Service. The spaces tend to be free and have no time limits.

Get Weekly Disability News

Disability Services E-News is a listserv that keeps subscribers informed about resources and issues that affect people with physical and sensory disabilities.

The listserv sends out one brief e-mail each week. The listserv is the primary vehicle for publicly announcing meetings and activities of the Disability Services Board and will in the future tell you how to get online issues of the *Disability Services Beacon*.

To subscribe, simply go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists/. Fill in your e-mail address, click on the box before “Disability services and news,” and then click subscribe. You will be sent an e-mail asking you to respond in order to finish subscribing. You must respond to this e-mail and write “ok” in the body to complete the subscription.

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs,

services, and activities. This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 703-324-5421 or TTY 703-449-1186, or send an email to disabilityservices@fairfaxcounty.gov. Allow 7 working days for preparation of the material.

Fairfax Area Disability Services Board

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Providence District: Rusty Glazer

Springfield District: Donna Martinez

Sully District: Ann Pimley

The Next DSB Meeting is

on the second Monday
of the month, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Government Center
12000 Gov. Ctr. Parkway
Fairfax

Meetings are open to the public; public comment, no more than 3 minutes in length, is welcome during the public comment period. For information or to request accommodations, please call 703-324-5421, TTY 703-449-1186, or send an e-mail to disabilityservices@fairfaxcounty.gov 5 working days prior to the meeting.